



*U.S. Small Business Administration
200 North Broadway, Suite 1500
St. Louis, MO 63102
Ph. (314) 539-6600; Fax (314) 539-3785*

Release Date: For Immediate Release

**For more information contact:
Rose E. Garland, (314) 539-6600, Ext. 232**

Autotire Car Care Centers Provide Straight Talk and Great Service

ST. LOUIS - "Straight Talk. Great Service!" are two commitments Autotire Car Care Centers promise. This small business was formed by three principals, Gene Latham, Ray Latham and John Ronsick in 1981 for the purpose of buying six retail tire stores from a nationally known tire company. Autotire has grown from those initial six stores to 23 retail locations, a wholesale tire division, and a parts division. The Autotire warehouse has over 35,000 square feet which houses thousands of tires. Over 200 people are employed.

Throughout this evolution period, Autotire cultivated a relationship with the St. Charles County Economic Development Council and the U.S. Small Business Administration to participate in four 504 loans. The CDC/504 loan program is a long-term financing tool for economic development within a community. The 504 program provides growing businesses with long-term, fixed rate financing for major fixed assets, such as land and buildings. The total financing of this four-building project amounted to \$1.66 million. Autotire Car Care Centers were expanding!

Then in January 1997, the three principals introduced Bottom Line Pricing on all tires. This Bottom Line Pricing includes 24-hour roadside assistance, nationwide road hazard warranty, mounting, lifetime balancing, lifetime rotation, valve stems, disposal, 30-day ride guarantee, and the lowest price promise. "When the consumer sees an advertised price for a tire that is the price they are going to pay! Absolutely nothing more!" said Ronsick. "We hoped

that this would boost the tire industry's reputation and ensure that consumers get a fair and honest price from us."

In August 1999, they became a member of the American Car Care Centers group. This enabled their customers to be part of the best warranty programs in the country. "Automotive service work done at Autotire is backed by a coast to coast warranty that is good at over 21,000 repair facilities nationwide," said Ronsick. "This provides a great peace of mind to all those families who hit the road for their summer vacations."

Thus the "Straight Talk. Great Service!"